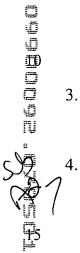
What is claimed is:

- A dual-stage optical isolator comprising: 1.
 - a first stage disposed along an optical path; and
 - a second stage disposed along said path and rotated 90° with respect to said first stage.

The optical isolator of claim 1, wherein said first stage comprises:

- a first birefringent wedge having an optic axis and a first wedge angle;
- a second birefringent wedge having an optic axis 45° apart from said optic axis of said first birefringent wedge and a second wedge angle; and a first faraday rotator disposed between said first and second wedges.
- 3. The optical isolator of claim 2, wherein said first and second wedge angles are substantially equal.
 - The optical isolator of claim 3, wherein said first faraday rotator is configured to rotate the polarization of applied light by 45°.
- The optical isolator of claim 4, wherein said second stage comprises: 5.
 - a third birefringent wedge having an optic axis 90° apart from the second birefringent wedge and a third wedge angle;
 - a fourth birefringent wedge having an optic axis 45° apart from the third birefringent wedge and a fourth wedge angle; and
 - a second faraday rotator disposed between said third and fourth wedges for rotating a polarization plane by 45°.



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- 6. An optical isolator comprising:
 - a first stage configured to refract a light ray applied in a forward direction into a first ray and a second ray; and
 - a second stage rotated 90° with respect to said first stage and configured to refract said first and second rays in a substantially parallel manner.
- 7. The optical isolator of claim 6, wherein said first ray is the e-ray with respect to said first stage and is the o-ray with respect to said second stage, and said second ray is the o-ray with respect to said first stage and is the e-ray with respect to said second stage.
- 8. The optical isolator of claim 7 further configured such that said e- and o-rays exit from said second stagehaving orthogonal polarizations and separated by a walk-off distance, thereby forming a plane.
- 9. The optical isolator of claim 8, wherein said first stage comprises:
 - a first birefringent wedge having an optic axis and a first wedge angle;
 - a second birefringent wedge having an optic axis 45° apart from said first birefringent wedge and a second wedge angle; and
 - a first faraday rotator disposed between said first and second wedges having a polarization plane rotation angle of 45°.
- 10. The optical isolator of claim 9, wherein said first and second wedge angles are substantially equal.
- 11. The optical isolator of claim 10, wherein said first faraday rotator is configured to rotate the polarization of applied light by 45°.

- 12. The optical isolator of claim 9, wherein said second stage comprises:
 - a third birefringent wedge having an optic axis angle 90° apart from said second birefringent and a third wedge angle;
 - a fourth birefringent wedge having an optic axis angle 45° apart from said third birefringent wedge and a fourth wedge angle; and
 - a second faraday rotator disposed between said third and fourth wedges having polarization plane rotating angle of 45°.
- 13. The optical isolator of claim 12, wherein said second faraday rotator is configured to rotate the polarization of applied light by 45°.
- 14. The optical isolator of claim 13, wherein a rotation direction of said first and second faraday rotators is at least one of a same and opposite direction.
- 15. An optical isolator comprising:

 first means for refracting a light ray applied in a forward direction into a first ray
 and a second ray; and
 second means, rotated 90° with respect to said first means, for refracting said first
 and second rays in a substantially parallel manner.
- 16. The optical isolator of claim 15, wherein said first ray is an e-ray with respect to said first means and is an o-ray with respect to said second means, and said second ray is the o-ray with respect to said first means and is the e-ray with respect to said second means.

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- 17. The optical isolator of claim 16, wherein said e- and o-rays exit from said second means having orthogonal polarizations and separated by a walk-off distance, thereby forming a plane.
- 18. The optical isolator of claim 17, wherein said first means comprises:

 a first birefringent means having an optic axis and a first angle;
 a second birefringent means having an optic axis 45° apart from said first
 birefringent means and a second angle; and
 a first rotator means disposed between said first and second means for rotating
 a polarization plane of applied light by 45°.
- 19. The optical isolator of claim 18, wherein said first and second angles are substantially equal.
- 20. The optical isolator of claim 18, wherein said second means comprises:

 a third birefringent means having an optic axis angle 90° apart from said second birefringent means and a third angle;

 a fourth birefringent means having an optic axis angle 45° apart from said third birefringent means and a fourth angle; and

 a second rotator means disposed between said third and fourth means for rotating a polarization plane of applied light by 45°.